

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Daily Christian Living

WHY DECEMBER 25?

CUPS OF COLD WATER

A MESSAGE FROM HANNAH

A WHITE CHRISTMAS *versus*
THE RIGHT CHRISTMAS

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

THE PROCESS AND THE END

Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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LETTERS

Hunger for Something not Synthetic
Dear Friend:

I feel in my heart that the Megiddo Mission is teaching the true word of God as it comes from the Book, without thought of personal gain or glory or building a large congregation of mostly insincere people, a large church bank account, plus all the other false manipulations that are indulged in.

All my life I have searched for the truth, to satisfy my hunger for something not synthetic.

Kennebunk, Maine

C. J. McC.

A Help in Rough Times

Dear Sisters:

The MESSAGE is a wonderful help when we want to know about God. I pray and hope you will be able to keep up the good work, as the world is getting rougher every year; if we learn what God wants us to do, we do not mind it so much.

Waverly, Nova Scotia

Mrs. W. H. B.

The End of the Quest

Dear Brother:

I have thanked God many times that I have made the acquaintance of the Megiddo Mission because it has been so helpful to me and also the progressive letter of each month is a most wonderful source of knowledge in helping one to understand, from the spiritual sense, the Word of God.

God knows the ones who are earnest and that is why I was led to the portals of the Megiddo Mission and how glad and thankful I am that in this dark place I have at last reached the end of my search. Now my only task is to make sure that my preparation is sound and water-tight, and that I will be acceptable unto the Lord. If the people of this world today who are jostling each other in striving for greater wealth and greater power would only redirect their efforts into a more profitable and spiritual channel, they would find a far greater wealth. The avenue for the quest is found in Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 8. "The unsearchable riches of Christ." I am sure that the benefits derived therefrom would be a most acceptable investment.

Onehunga, New Zealand

R. L.

Happy

Dear E—:

On Friday I was very happy to receive the book called, *Letters of the Bible, New Testament*. It is very nice, and the pictures in color are just lovely. I will enjoy reading this book.

I want to thank you all very much. I will close with this verse, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Clarkson, Ont., Can.

C. W.

A Message for

Daily Christian Living

THE Letter to Colosse is a letter to faithful brethren, to the instructed, in which Paul writes, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have for all the saints"—Paul was not negligent to pray and to give thanks to God. Children should be brought up to pray every day and thank God for their blessings. We were brought up from our youth to pray to God, and we are thankful for it—"for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven"—oh! that wonderful hope is laid up for us, life and immortality, and Christ will bring it to us in the Day of His coming if we are doers of His word—"whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth."

This truth of the gospel causes all in whom it dwells to bring forth fruits, the lovely fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, patience, godliness and so on—"as ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit" (Col. 1:7, 8). Here we learn the names of some of the faithful ones whom we shall be glad to meet in the Resurrection Morning.

Walk Worthy of the Lord

"For this cause we also," the letter continues, "since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Oh, this is what to desire and long for, to be *filled* with the knowledge of His will, to be filled with it, *pouring* it out in our everyday life! Not simply filled with knowledge of the doctrine, but we must *carry out* that knowledge in our daily life, must learn to discern between good and evil—"that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

How important for us to be fruitful in every good work. If we are getting angry or impatient, we are not being a Christian; our daily home life is what makes a Christian. It is a continual work and practice; yes, *increasing* in the knowledge of God. We must do it or we shall never get rid of these evil propensities. It is just high time we were waking up to the necessity of watching constantly. If some one does not speak right, we must.

Be Christians Now . . . Before Sickness

The bed of sickness or the deathbed will not make a Christian. If we do not conquer our strong, stubborn will

in health, we need not think we are going to do it then.

We ought never to forget those wonderful verses in Jer. 13:15, 16. When we come to that time, we shall be as we have lived. We are naturally strong in our ways and we want to do what we want to do; but we had better hurry up and not have our own way. "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken." Oh! be not proud. The Prophet of the Mighty God says, "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."

Yes, give glory to the Lord now; "behold, now is the accepted time . . . now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). I like the reading of Ecclesiasticus 18:21 in the Douay Version: "Humble thyself before thou art sick..." Do not wait until you are sick; give glory to God while you are in health. If you are accustomed to having your own way, you are not going to break it down in a minute. And some will become so set in their way that they can never break it, for we read in Jer. 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

We all would like to have that eternal home, to have our strength renewed so that we would never grow tired or weary; we would like the privilege of stepping back even to the strength of our younger days; that would be a wonderful thing, however, it would not last. Oh, to step forward to strength which shall never abate but will be eternal is what we long to attain! It will never be ours unless we now exercise unto godliness.

We are commanded to return good for evil. If somebody is impatient and cross and says something evil or unkind to us, the natural mind wants to speak back; but we must bridle our tongue and not return evil for evil. If we would only keep the Word in mind, we could do the work of a year in a month and the work of a month in a week, but we never will if we go along thinking we have plenty of time. In the natural we can work hard and accomplish much in the last few minutes, and so in the spiritual. We want to hasten and become fruitful in every good work; for oh, brethren, we are now in the closing hours of the day of salvation, and our time will soon be over.

Be Strengthened According to His Glorious Power

The Apostle continues in Col. 1:11, "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;"—yes, that is how we must become, strengthened unto all patience; *all* patience. If something does not go just right, or if someone does not do what we think he should, that is no excuse; we must have all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. We should get to thinking it is such a wonderful thing, such an opportunity to develop the new man and thus be strengthened according to His glorious power.

I believe there is something in Romans 5, beginning

with the first verse, showing how Paul rejoiced always under trial, thus showing what spiritual strength he had developed. He says, "Therefore being justified by faith,"—by doing the works of faith, the works of Christians—"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Oh, that is what it is, what causes many to rejoice; the thought of the glory to be revealed! "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience;"—not glory because of the tribulation but because of the patient faith *which brings the glory*. The tribulations and trials bring the patience, and the patience brings experience; and the experience brings hope. Paul passed through the trials and took them patiently, and they gave him experience; he exercised unto godliness, was not overcome by trial but this truth worked in him mightily; it brought him experience in discerning between good and evil, and the experience brought hope. No doubt there were times when he stumbled and fell, but truth worked mightily so that he came out best and at the last could say that he had fought a good fight, had finished his course and had kept the faith (II Tim. 4:7).

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts"—what is the love of God? "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (I John 5:3). If we just think of that every day of our lives, that somebody is going to try us, is going to say something or do something that we do not want them to, it will help us to be on our guard. Oh, let us watch to see how we pass through the trial, who will gain the victory, the old man or the new! Here is the "old man," our natural disposition, struggling against the new, against truth; but let us follow Paul's example and come off more than conquerors.

Translated for Christ's Kingdom

In our lesson, we read, v. 13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us"—it reads here in the King James Version "*into* the kingdom," but in the original it is "*for* the kingdom of his dear Son." The Kingdom of God is promised to those that love Him, and to love Him is to keep His commandments; and thus as we keep His commandments He is delivering us from darkness and is translating us for the future Kingdom of His dear Son. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;"—not that Christ died to atone for our sins, but by obedience to His word, by dying to sin as He died, we obtain forgiveness of sins.

We are told in Heb. 12:24 that Jesus is "the mediator of the new covenant." There was a sprinkling of literal blood in the old covenant under the type. But in the new covenant is "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." These words of eternal life are sprinkled upon us; some from Isaiah, from Jeremiah, from Jesus, Peter and Paul. We must drink in these words of life and let them become a part of our very being, that they may redeem us.

"Christ . . . only Hath Immortality"

This first chapter of Colossians says of Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every

creature." Yes, Christ is the only one of our race ever made in the image of God, because He only has received immortality (I Tim. 6:16). How is He the firstborn of every creature? He is "the firstborn from the dead . . . the beginning of the creation of God" (Col. 1:18; Rev. 3:14). This chapter is one that the theologians rely on, claiming that it teaches that Christ existed before any one lived on the earth. But it is just as plain as can be when we understand the truth. It was a wonderful work that our founder accomplished, to uncover the hidden gem and bring it forth from the darkness of the Apostasy. No other church is teaching that Christ is the only one of "the world to come" (Heb. 2:5) that has received the Spirit birth.

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth." Ah! This new heaven and earth of the "world to come." The first heaven and earth passed away at the time of the Flood, and the second heaven and earth are now, and shall pass away when God's judgments come upon humanity. The rulers of earth are the political heavens, and the people are the earth over whom they rule; and in that soon-coming Day they "shall pass away with a great noise. . . . Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:4-13).

Christ is before all things of that world. "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." He is the Head of the Church, the first one born from the dead to immortality. None of the faithful rulers of the "world to come" have received the Spirit birth but the Head only, and after the Judgment the body will receive the grand birth of the Spirit. It is a wonderful thing; and to think the entire world are as dark as night concerning these principalities and powers of the new heaven and earth! The sleeping dead in Christ, together with the living faithful, shall not receive the Spirit birth until Christ comes and our mother—the truth—brings forth the man child who is to rule all nations (Rev. 12:5; 2:26).

Continue in the Faith

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled,"—if dead with Christ, then God's forgiveness will flow out. It all depends upon if you *continue* in the faith grounded and settled, "and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard,"—that you may grow, become dead to sin and alive to God. Do you not know that you have to become full grown trees of righteousness of God's own planting; and do you not think that you had better become settled and grounded so you will not be tossed to and fro? If we want to grow a good tree in the natural, we plant it down deep and settle the soil around it firmly; so in the spiritual, if we want to be good trees, he says that we must become "grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel."

How highly blest we are to be living down in these closing days of Gentile times! I am so glad we are on this side of those dreadful days of superstition and can look back to the time when truth lay dead for centuries and centuries in the past. By the eye of faith we can see the City, and, oh! we ought to be the most thankful, the most stimulated people on earth and lift up our heads and re-

joyce, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. Our path is growing brighter and brighter unto the coming Day.

Jesus could look down through the centuries of time and could say, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Oh, He told us only few in this present age would find the way of life, for "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded,"—all taken up with the pleasures and cares of this life—"but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26—30).

I do not wonder that He warned in Rev. 18:4, 5 to *come out of this Sodom, this Babylon!* "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." We must be on our guard or we shall be ensnared.

Above all things let us be on guard against any and every thing that will stand in the way of our gaining the Kingdom, where the blest of all ages—every soul who has walked blamelessly before God—shall meet to bask in life and glory and majesty—in a "world without end"!

Why December 25?

UNDER the above caption, a daily paper once printed a curious and defiant editorial. Some inquisitive creature had wanted to know "exactly how it happens that Dec. 25 is Christmas Day." The "evidence" cited was familiar—to us, at least—and scarcely convincing, even to its writer. We quote:

"Not until centuries after the birth of the Saviour was Dec. 25 widely accepted as the day. The Gospels nowhere give the exact date. . . . The first authentic manuscript citation of Dec. 25 as the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ dates from the middle of the Fourth Century A. D.

"In finally selecting Dec. 25 for Christmas (Christ's Mass), the early church fathers were probably not unmindful that the Roman feast week of the Saturnalia ended on Dec. 24, after which some purification of the soul would certainly be in order. Worshipers of the Persian god Mithras celebrated Dec. 25 as the birthday of the sun. . . .

"And as long as our research has wandered this far, a word about Christmas ceremonies:

"Many go back to pagan rites; for instance, those associated with mistletoe, holly wreaths, the burning of the Yule log. Decoration of a tree for Christmas is an old Germanic and Scandinavian custom. . . .

"All of which refreshes us on the facts about Christmas.

"Now, away with bare facts . . . and on with the Christmas spirit!"

So, facts do not count, it seems.

It is strange how people like to be fooled, and to fool themselves. In their dealings with the butcher and the baker, they expect to be factual, and the Department of Internal Revenue expects them to be. Yet when we come to so profound a matter as the birthday of the Son of God, which, believe it or not, is what Christmas is supposed to be—"away with bare facts!"

With the heathen background of both date and customs established and admitted, is it Christian, or even consistent, to continue to celebrate such an event at such a time or in such a manner? We say, No. We say, with Jeremiah (10:2, 3), "Learn not the way of the heathen, . . . for the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest . . . with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold. . . ." We say, with the Apostle Paul, "What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? . . . and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (II Cor. 6:14—16).

There is in this wide world at least one group—the Megiddo Mission Church—who do not scoff at the facts of this situation, but take them very seriously, even to the point of obeying the Apostle's closing injunction: "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." An idol is an idol, whether Saturn, or Mithras, or Santa Claus.

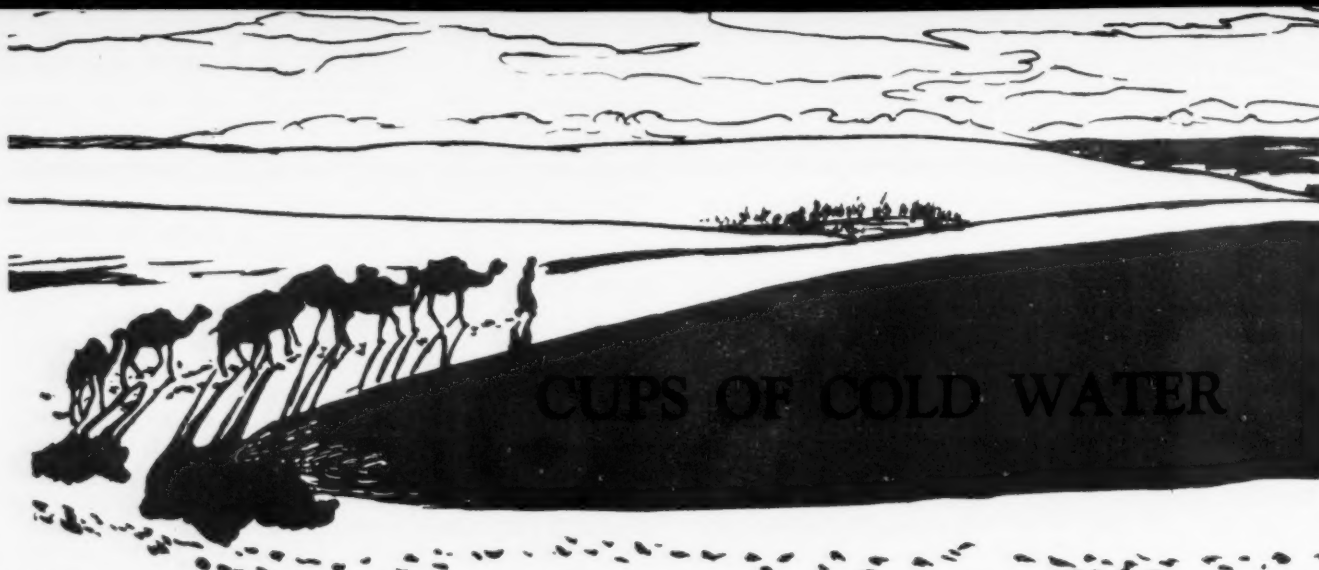
The origins of the so-called Christmas are correctly stated in the editorial. This is no accident, but a fulfillment of the prediction of Daniel (7:25), that in the Great Apostasy the power of Rome should change both God's laws and His times, until the saints were completely worn out and the truth cast to the ground (8:10), all the world turned from God's Word to pagan fables (II Tim. 4:3, 4).

The editorial writer erred in saying that the true date of Christ's birth is not revealed. A chain of Scriptural and historical evidence places the great event in the Spring, in the month Abib, or Nisan (March-April, Gregorian calendar), at which time it is fittingly celebrated by the Megiddo fellowship throughout the world. A future issue of the MESSAGE will present proofs in detail—the facts on which the true Christmas spirit may be based, in a manner pleasing to God and His Son.

As for the present holiday, with its commercialism and pagan customs and its unsavory background, we shall ignore it. We do not expect the majority to consent to facts that are not to their liking. In view of our Lord's statement in Matt. 7:13, 14 we have no desire to be in agreement with the majority, who choose the broad way to destruction.

Facts cannot be thus blithely waved off, along with the Eternal's pronouncements and laws and standards. They are stubborn things, and in the Day of Judgment, it is not numbers, or words, or ancient customs, or human weaknesses, that will be weighed, but actions only (I Sam. 2:3). In other words, facts.

There's no thrill in easy sailing when the skies are clear and blue; . . . There's no joy in merely doing things which anyone can do. . . . But there is some satisfaction that is mighty sweet to take, . . . When you reach a destination that you thought you couldn't make.



THE scene—a desert. The blazing sun beats down unmercifully upon the weary traveler. His aching eyes look feverishly for an oasis, a stream, or a rock to cast a shadow in which he may rest; but in vain. The agony of thirst is upon him and in an awful moment of desperation he sinks unconscious to the burning sands.

A moment, or so it seems to him, and he hears a kind voice speak and feels something pressed to his lips and—it is water! With the strength from joy and relief, he greets the giver of a cup of cold water, the savior of his life!

A desert, a wanderer, thirst, a friend, rescue, a cup of cold water! Thus an individual is snatched from the clutches of death. But what can give more satisfaction, more pleasure, than to dispense the soul-sustaining, life-giving water of Truth to those who are weak and faltering upon the desert places of life's weary ways. Are we ready to fulfill this mission?

We all should like to stand in royal palaces and be cup-bearers to the King, but all the time the King is saying, "Give a cup of cold water in My name!" This is a more acceptable service to Him. We need not wait to find some golden goblet in which to proffer the needed refreshment. We need not wait to do some great deed of valor for our fellow men, or prepare eloquent speeches to offer to a critical crowd, for the Lord is quietly saying, "Take a plain cup and give My people to drink!"

It is a very wonderful thing that the finest services are within the power of everyone to render, rich or poor, great or small. We find that the deepest ministries, the most appreciated services, find their symbols in "cups of cold water," which it is in the power of everyone to give. A word in season is worth infinitely more than the gift of a jewel. To rekindle hope in a fainting soul is far more precious than to bestow upon him earthly goods.

"Cups of cold water"—these are simple ministries of refreshment: the inspirational letter of comfort written to those in lands afar or near; infusing courage into a fellow pilgrim beset by trials; letting our enthusiasm warm and invigorate a brother whose eye has drifted from the prize; rekindling the flame of faith in one who has become weakened in the struggle; giving a warning cry when another is in danger. These and many more are

the services which all of us are privileged to bestow. Everyone needs these gracious services of refreshment, and at times there is the greatest need where there seems to be least.

That we may ever have a cup of cold water to give to our fellow men, we must continually tap the deep resources of faith that our reservoir may not grow shallow and ineffective. A shallow reserve cannot inspire, cannot upbuild, cannot sustain life in ourselves or in others. Great thoughts, holy meditation, purity of aspiration, these are deep reserves from which we can successfully draw with joy as we cross a hundred heated deserts.

And as we cross the burning sands of affliction side by side in company with those we fondly cherish, are we loathe to press the cup of cold water to the lips of the pilgrim who would hasten off to follow a mirage? Do we stay our hand and our heart when we might aid and encourage him who is stumbling on his way, clutching after a deceitful mirage of worldly enticements? Can we not from our supply of strength, strengthen those who are apt to lose their taste for the holy, the divine, and are in search of stolen waters? Do we remain insensible to our brother's need for cheer and warmth, while we are warm and blessed?

How oft some fellow traveler stumbles or is overtaken by weariness, wholly unaware that his soul is famishing for water! How alert we must be to proffer the cool and sparkling cup lest his fainting become fatal and we journey on ashamed of our neglect!

Some, though surrounded by an abundance of water, need again to have the refreshment proffered; for their eyes are so dulled by the commonplace, the cares and trials of life, that they are unable to recognize the flowing fountain at their very finger tips.

How oft we find the water has been within our grasp and at times it remains untasted, unrelished. And yet, when another proffers his cup, fresh, sparkling, we recognize it anew and we thirst. Blessed, holy thirst! Never does it go unsatisfied.

Fill your cup, pilgrim, for there are dry deserts ahead, and thirsty souls and hungry hearts who need your cup of cold water—and mine.



FIFTH OF SERIES:

VOICES

from the Roll of the Book

A Message from Hannah



GREETINGS, friends of Jehovah! I come to you from the long ago, with a great longing to help you serve Jehovah faithfully. As of old, I rejoice in the Lord: "... my horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord... neither is there any rock like our God.... The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.... He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.... He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

By now you must know that I am Hannah, the mother of little Samuel. The Lord was merciful to me and in answer to my longing prayer blessed me with a son. I named him Samuel because I had asked him of the Lord. As you remember, he grew up to be a Judge and a Prophet in Israel.

No doubt you will also recall that I had vowed to give Samuel to the Lord. I kept my vow. While he was still very young, I took him to Eli, the priest, and left him there that he should serve the Lord by ministering in the temple. How happy I was to give my little son to the Lord! I did so want to do something acceptable unto the Eternal Creator in return for all He had done for me. My joy was complete!

Don't think me hardhearted and without affection because I was willing to give up my first-born. I loved Samuel dearly, but it would have been selfishness on my part to withhold from God the fulfillment of my vow. It would have been a tragedy on my part to have vowed and not to have kept my vow. To have kept the child by my side, I would not have been considering his future. I wanted for my son the things which this natural life could not give... those eternal things. I knew that for his good he should start taking on responsibilities while very young. In the temple, among the worshipers where

reverence and homage was daily offered unto the Lord, that was the place for Samuel.

Now Samuel was not unlike any child of your day. He went through the very same stages that your children do. Being aware of it, I began to teach him early, yes, very early, while his mind was yielding and pliable. Knowing that I had to do my work well in training him, even as you parents of today are under the same obligation, I began earnestly shaping and molding his character according to godly principles. For the hope of their becoming kings and priests in God's Kingdom, I knew only too well that children must be taught to act and behave like children of nobility and royalty. To be a king, someday, the child should first grow up like a prince, manly and kingly in every sense of the word.

O my beloved friends, parents and teachers, I plead with you, teach the little ones obedience. Do not delay. Their lives and perhaps your own depend upon their being obedient. With children, every waking moment counts. Only too soon do children grow up. You will never have another opportunity. If you fail them in not giving them proper discipline, they may bring you sorrow and disgrace.

As you all know, the young, tender years are the foundation years for a fruitful maturity; so a child must be taught obedience to yield good fruits when he grows up. In my day and age, that was an essential part of a child's training. I notice there is an extreme laxity in your modern twentieth-century-way of bringing up children. That, no doubt, is the reason for so much juvenile delinquency. The penitentiaries of your land are filled with individuals who were never taught to obey their parents or the laws of their land. Now, in our day and age, waywardness among children was unusual. Parents demanded obedience and received it, and also received love and respect besides.

Indeed, obedience must be taught. Do it firmly but kindly; not in a brutish manner, for that stirs up resentment. It must be done in love and understanding. Above all, do it in patience and kindness. Won't you remember that you cannot expect a child to obey God if he has not learned to mind his parents?

Knowing that the very core of righteousness is obedience, I was careful to see that Samuel learned to obey. So carefully was he trained in obedience that it never entered his mind to disobey his parents or those who had the rule over him. It became second nature to him. He grew to realize that in obeying his parents, he was obeying his Heavenly Father.

Parents, I know you would like to have your child as happy as little Samuel was. He was happy to serve in the temple, and he did it with his whole heart. Children need to be impressed with the thought that they belong to the Lord so long as they try to please Him. They should be encouraged to strive for the eternal things that God offers, rather than for the present fleeting things of this life. A child likes to hear that God is interested in him and that He will use everyone who yields himself to His service. Such talks made Samuel happy; and I am sure it would make you and your children happier if you talked on these things more often.

I am sure that I need not tell you this, that children come into this world with their minds blank pages, as

it were. Impressions become written upon their minds. That is how they learn. Please see that your children are learning the right things, the things that will be a profit and a help to them. Children invariably copy their elders, their friends, their neighbors. I plead with every one of you, make your lives worthy of emulation. Your child is your responsibility and will surely be affected by your life. That growing, observing, and impressionable mind looks to you for an example and pattern for his own life. Your child is watching you, copying you, walking in your footsteps, observing your actions, echoing your words. Are you the perfect example for him?

Before I leave you, I would try to have you realize the opportunity that you all have in gaining stars in your crown. Every child that you direct and guide into the Kingdom shall be a glittering jewel in your favor. You not only have their companionship now but will enjoy them throughout eternity if you do on your part now. You would not want to keep yourselves or your dear ones out of the Kingdom willfully, would you? Then, I beg of you, do all to the glory of the Lord. Devote your life, prayerfully, tearfully and faithfully, in serving God and others.

And now, friends, I must go back into the past, but I shall look forward to meeting you and your families again on those beautiful Eternal Shores.

Fare thee well, until the great Day of the Lord.

A WHITE CHRISTMAS *versus* THE RIGHT CHRISTMAS

CHARACTERS

ESTHER, a serious teen-age schoolgirl. The other characters are her Classmates.

PLACE—In the lunchroom at the Wabash School.

TIME—December, 1956.

The eight girls, having finished their lunch, are gathered in a group, obviously a bit more serious than usual, having a great problem on hand.

PAULINE.—I really don't know what to get for Susan this year. I have just about used up most of my allowance, and Christmas just a few days away! I am almost frantic! (Worried expression.)

ELAINE.—Oh, do not worry too much about it, Pauline. I am in the same boat, too. Patty, whose name did you get?

PATTY.—My dear, that is a secret. I am not telling anyone. But by the way, did you notice that Esther asked Miss Wallace to withdraw her name from the box today?

BONNY.—Yes. I heard Esther ask Miss Wallace. I wonder why. I am sure I would not want to be the only person in the whole class to do a thing like that. 'Most everyone was staring at her.

JUDITH.—(With disgust)—Perhaps her mother is too stingy to buy a present for Esther to bring to school. They are a most peculiar family, you know. We tried to sell them our Christmas cards a few weeks ago. Would they buy them? I got a sermon and no sale. And Esther knows perfectly well that our class goes "all out" trying to sell the most cards and win the banner. But, no! They simply will not co-operate.

ELAINE.—My! I feel sorry for Esther. She never comes to our school Christmas party, and we do have such fun.

(Girls nod and smilingly agree.)

DONNA.—She has no style; plain Jane, if you ask me. (Shrugs shoulders.)

ANNA LEE.—Why, she doesn't even go into the auditorium to see Santa Claus! She asked Miss Wallace if she might be excused, and

she stayed in the class room to do arithmetic—of all things!

PATTY.—Well, believe me, I would rather hear a little ha, ha, ha, and ho, ho, ho, (booming voice imitating Santa's) any day, than work at arithmetic. Wouldn't you, girls?

ALL.—Yes! Yes! (Pebbles of laughter.)

LOIS.—Here is Esther now. (Laughter continues as ESTHER enters, carrying schoolbag and small box, and smilingly waves friendly greeting to her fellow students as she takes her seat during dinner recess.)

PAULINE.—Esther, why did you have your name taken out of the box today? Don't you believe in Christmas? don't you believe in exchanging gifts at this season?

ELAINE.—(Before ESTHER could reply)—And, come to think of it, you did not bring candy for our Hallowe'en party.

PATTY.—Why be so different, Esther? You don't do *this*, you can't do *that*. What can you do, just arithmetic?

(Girls smilingly nudge each other.)

ESTHER.—(Smiles)—Shall we sit down, girls? I shall be very happy to answer your questions. First, let me say that I really do like to do other things besides arithmetic; for, I must admit that it is not one of my best subjects. As you girls know, when it comes to arithmetic, I do not lead the class. However, it is a necessary subject, so I must struggle along with my problems.

ALL.—Don't we know it! (Nodding in agreement.)

ANNA LEE.—Tell us, Esther, do you celebrate Christmas? We are very anxious to know.

ESTHER.—Why, yes, Anna Lee, we observe Christmas in the spring, not on December 25th, because Jesus was not born in the wintertime when it is snowy and wet.

DONNA.—In the spring? But whoever heard of Christmas in the spring?

LOIS.—Then you don't get any Christmas gifts like we do. You poor, poor girl! Isn't it a shame? (Turns to girls who nod in sympathy.)

ESTHER.—Before I answer, may I offer a suggestion?

ALL.—Of course you may. Go ahead, Esther.

ESTHER.—How would you like to take a trip to Palestine?

ALL.—(*Girls rise together, gasping*)—To Palestine? Not really? When, Esther, when? (*All talk together in great excitement.*)

ESTHER.—Right now, girls. RIGHT NOW!

PAULINE.—Oh, I think it would be simply thrilling! How do we travel? by plane?

ESTHER.—By View-Master, my dear young lady. No tickets to buy, free transportation, and no immigration barriers. (*Takes out View-Master and shows it to girls.*)

ALL.—(*Gasp and groan in dismay*)—Esther, how could you! (*Girls then sink in chairs.*)

ESTHER.—Well, isn't this the nearest approach to the real thing? I think it is pretty wonderful, myself. I always wanted a View-Master, you know, and when I discovered this (*showing View-Master*) among my Christmas gifts last year, I was a happy girl.

LOIS.—So you really *did* get a present after all? I was terribly worried about you because I just don't know how I could ever get along without Christmas, and presents, and everything. (*Shakes head, serious expression.*)

ESTHER.—We enjoy that part of Christmas too, Lois, but the gifts that we receive are not toys that break up in a short time, but useful gifts, educational, like this, for instance. (*Showing View-Master.*)

LOIS.—(*Esther stoops to whisper to Lois, who gasps*)—A whole bushel hamper full of gifts? Oh, my! I believe I would like Esther's Christmas best, after all. (*Turns to girls with amazed look.*)

ESTHER.—(*Picking up View-Master*)—And now to Palestine—shall we go?

JUDITH.—Yes, yes, Esther. Please do get started.

BONNY.—I am so excited I can hardly wait.

PAULINE.—Why, I never dreamed I would ever be able to take a trip to Palestine between classes.

ESTHER.—But did you ever stop to think, girls, we are living in a remarkable age? Now, we shall turn back the pages of history, and, through the medium of this little stereoscope, the scenes will come to life; but first, a brief stop in Rome—that great city of the mighty Cæsars. Patty, will you please describe this scene?

PATTY.—(*Takes View-Master, looks intently, and with animation describes the scene*)—It is the throne-room in the Emperor's palace, a handsomely-furnished apartment. Behind the throne and under a canopy of crimson velvet stands a huge golden eagle—symbol of the great Roman power. And here, on the throne, in regal splendor, sits Cæsar Augustus himself. He is signing a decree that all the Roman world must register to be taxed. (*She hands View-Master to the girls; each in turn views the scene, makes suitable exclamation.*)

ESTHER.—Our next stop is the little town of Nazareth in Galilee, where lives Joseph, the village carpenter, and his wife Mary. (*Gives View-Master to PAULINE.*)

PAULINE.—Here we see them leaving their home for the journey to Bethlehem, Mary riding on a donkey and Joseph walking beside her. There are others traveling with them—friends, I assume. With their pretty costumes, it is quite a colorful party. It is a beautiful day; the sun is shining brilliantly; it does not look one tiny bit like wintertime. The trees and shrubs are so green, and such a profusion of flowers! Isn't it simply beautiful? (*Hands View-Master to ELAINE.*)

ELAINE.—I guess the winters in Palestine are much milder than our North American climate. It is quite likely they do not have winter in the Holy Land at all. Hm! It does look very un-winter-like, but well, I would not give a "thank you" for a Christmas without snow. I like mine with lots of snow.

(*Girls take turns with the View-Master.*)

ESTHER.—Girls, have you forgotten the geography test we had yesterday? (*Girls think hard.*) We were asked to describe climatic conditions in the Mediterranean lands. The answer was, "The Mediterranean lands of the world have summers often as hot as those in the tropics, but the winters are often cold enough for snow and frost."

(Continued on page 11)

Musings of the Editor

IT SEEMS that the longer we ponder the Scriptures and the deeper our insight into human nature, the more we realize that true humility is the highest virtue. It is the mother of them all. Without humility every other virtue seems barren, destitute, lacking the accessories which make it truly admirable.

The Almighty, through all His spokesmen, pleads with man to be humble, and with every appeal He repeats the gracious promise: *Exaltation follows* (Prov. 22: 4; Matt. 23: 12; I Pet. 5: 6). But man, impetuous, presumptuous man,

HUMILITY cannot wait; he must have the exaltation at once, and so he exalts himself. All such shall be abased.

Humility is the sign of Christian maturity. Youth—rash, hasty, over-confident—seldom gives expression to this beautiful virtue. Only with the years, the crosses, and the losses do men grow humble and wise.

Many through the ages, and in this age, have fallen because of big-headedness, thinking they knew more than God. Not so our Great Example. He it was who said, "I can of mine own self do nothing." What a wonderful expression of humility from the heart of the Master! With all of Christ's superior wisdom, with His most excellent mastery of all temptation, with His ability to heal all manner of disease, yet He stripped Himself bare of the glory, and attributed all the power to a Higher Source.

Then, too, there was Paul, greatest of the Apostles; yet he felt himself to be the least because of his past record. Like him, even in the midst of a reformed life, the remembrance of our horrible past should and must be so vivid in our minds as to keep us humble throughout the remainder of our days.

Though all the inspired writers are vocal on the subject of humility, Paul seems to give it the most detailed attention. And why? He is the Apostle to us Gentiles, and, foreknowing that the perilous times of the last days would be caused by a shortage of humility, by men being lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, high-minded (II Tim. 3: 1-4), he encouraged the latter-day Christian to develop the extreme opposite: to walk worthy of his calling with "all lowliness and meekness"; "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think"; to "let nothing be done through strife or vainglory."

O Christian toiler of life's brief day, would you inhabit eternity? The invitation is extended to the humble: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isa. 57: 15). Will you qualify?

ZEALOUS CHRISTIANS

You will need leaflets to help explain to your friends, your relatives, your neighbors why your home is not decorated for the December 25th Saturnalia, why you did not send them greeting cards, why you are giving no presents. Order a supply of

Resons Why Members of the Megiddo Mission Observe Christmas in the S-P-R-I-N-G. Price 25 cents per 100.

Meditations

On the Word

"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you" (1 Samuel 12: 24).

It seems to be a weakness, if one may so call it, of every language that words have more than one meaning. Words are signs of ideas, of course, but when so many ideas, often contradictory, are attached to the same word, when there are different pronunciations for identical spellings, and *vice versa*, it can be confusing. Could a language be designed and accepted in which there would be one meaning for each word and a word for every meaning, it would gain in clarity what it might lose in subtlety.

In view of the existing stubborn facts, it is wise, if somewhat difficult, to select the proper definition; for the wrong choice may put us on entirely the wrong track. In no field is this more important than in Bible study, the Book being a translation from a very subtle Oriental language into an equally flexible Western tongue. As an example, consider the phrase, "the fear of the Lord," as so often found in Holy Writ. Our first reaction to the word "fear" is the thought of a familiar elemental instinct. Fear is a thing to be used but not abused; a valuable servant but a cruel master.

Literally-minded theologians, already drunk on the pagan falsehood of a place of everlasting torture reserved for the wicked and the unfortunate, quite naturally chose and accepted the most obvious and most familiar definition of the word. According to them, we must be good—which usually meant to observe certain prescribed forms and rituals and to contribute liberally to the support of the clergy—for fear of ending our career in the pit of everlasting fire and brimstone; or, escaping that, for fear of a prolonged stay in a very unpleasant place called Purgatory, until the wrath of an angry and vengeful Deity should be appeased.

It is questionable if such a "gospel" has ever resulted in much moral improvement. Some of the most lawless and bloodthirsty tribes of the earth are also believers in everlasting punishment of the most savage nature. The description of hell as found in the Koran, for instance, provides for a renewal of the sufferer's skin when the old one is well burned, that the torment may be the sharper. Comparison of the groups and individuals who do and do not believe in eternal torment convinces us that this sort of fear only hardens the heart and is a detriment to men and nations. It may be theoretically possible to frighten people into religion, but not into righteousness. It is "the goodness of God," the Apostle tells us in Romans 2: 4, that leads men and women to repentance. The Good Shepherd leads, not drives, His sheep.

Since the old theological concepts are incompatible with reason and facts, what are we to understand by "the fear of the Lord"? The Bible, being a self-interpreting Book, defines it fully and plainly: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride, and arrogance, and the evil way,

and the froward mouth, do I hate" (Prov. 8: 13).

Here we have something definite. The fear of God is the same as the love of God; to abhor all forms of evil and from free choice to keep His commandments (John 14: 15). If we really hate the evils of the world and of our own nature, we will not be found clinging to them or temporizing with them, but will cast them aside and turn with gladness to the better things proffered by the Eternal.

This fear of the Lord involves the familiar conception of fear in that we will not be over-confident but will realize how deceitful the flesh can be and proceed with due caution. Our only fear will be that of doing wrong, of losing our eternal reward. The man to whom God will look is the one who trembles, not at the threat of bodily pain, but at His Word (Isa. 66: 2). Divine fear will give us unbounded courage to stand for right. As was said of certain early reformers, we will fear God so much that we will fear nothing else.

The fear of the Lord will impel us to a wholehearted service. A halfhearted, double-minded, wavering service is worse than none at all. Such a servant loses both this world and the next, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," wrote the practical James, "... let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (1: 8, 7).

There is meaning in the sentence, "Serve him in truth." Millions upon millions are making a profession of serving God, but their effort is wasted and their worship vain because they serve in their own way, reserving the right to interpret the Scriptures, wresting them to their own destruction, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (II Pet. 1: 20; 3: 16; Matt. 15: 8, 9). One grain of the poison of human thought makes the whole dish unfit for use. "Thy word is truth" (John 17: 17); therefore to serve God in truth is to be governed by the Word in all things, without addition, alteration, reservation or interpretation. When it speaks, and whatever it speaks, we must obey if we love life. "If a man also strive for masteries," said Paul, "yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully"—according to the rules and conditions laid down by the One who awards the prizes at the end of the race. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the rules are already made and perfected (Ps. 19: 7), and cannot be improved by man.

As before stated, it is the goodness of God which draws us to Him. Not dread of unending torture, but consideration of the great things He has done for us. "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad" (Ps. 126: 3). In this life we are blessed far above our deserts, so much so that it requires constant watchfulness lest our temporal benefits become an old and familiar story to us and we accept them as our rights. The true Christian is always thankful, both for past favors and present blessings; nothing is baser or more unbecoming than ingratitude. But our greatest rejoicing is in God's promises of future life and glory, of which the temporal blessings are a token. Earthly things may take wings and fly away, but the eternal values remain. To us He has given freely the great things of His law, has made known His plan and His will, and, best of all, has offered us a share in tomorrow's bright new world, if we make ourselves worthy of the crown which is laid up for those who, like Paul, fight the good fight, finish the course and keep the faith.

Your Questions Answered

In I Thess. 4: 16 we read, "the dead in Christ shall rise first." Does this teach that there will be others raised later who were not in Christ?

Only those who covenanted to serve God will be called to Judgment. This text does not suggest a resurrection of another class. Verse 17 connects the thought, and states that those who are alive when Christ comes shall not go on ahead of those who are asleep. As soon as the Resurrection takes place the living will join them and together they shall be taken to be judged and rewarded.

Are there any Scriptural testimonies to show that there will be some people who shall never be resurrected?

Yes. Read Jer. 51: 39, 57, and Obadiah 16. Note the expressions, "They shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake"; and "they shall be as though they had not been." The Apostle Paul, in Romans 2: 12, states: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Only those who have come under the law of God and have covenanted to serve Him will be raised from the dead and be judged. Those who never accepted His law shall not be judged by the law. They shall sleep on and not wake.

Please explain Eph. 5: 11. If we are not to reprove the world for their evil, then to whom does this verse apply?

Several of the translations give "expose" the works of darkness, and Phillips renders it, "Steer clear of the activities of darkness; let your lives show by contrast how dreary and futile these things are. . . . For light is capable of 'showing up' everything for what it really is." What greater reproof can there be than to live a godly life in contrast to that of the world! Where there is light, it shows up the darkness all the more. And if a person has any conscience, he feels condemned.

Then, too, there is the development of the church. We are the light only as we walk in the light; there must be continual purging out of darkness until we finally become fully illuminated. We may be in possession of the light theoretically, but to always walk in it, to be morally cleansed by it, is another thing. We have to reprove the evil first as we see it in ourselves, and secondly among the believers, rather than going on in fellowship with them, if any of the works of darkness are manifested (Lev. 19: 17; I Tim. 5: 20; Prov. 9: 8; I John 1: 6).

Is the Book of Jashur in existence today?

The Book of Jashur is mentioned twice in the Bible, Joshua 10: 13; II Sam. 1: 18. It is not part of our Holy Scriptures. Whatever its nature was in its original state is not known to us. Evidently it did not contain any truth or historical data which were necessary to our salvation. If the Book of Jashur were essential to our salvation, God would have caused it to be preserved for us. The Scriptures as they are, are a thorough furnisher unto salvation (II Tim. 3: 16, 17).

Historians and scholars record that there have been forgeries of the book. There is a book published today, which is claimed to be a translation of the original book. In its preface it is claimed to be a translation from a manuscript found in Jerusalem in 1613, but no evidence exists as to the origin of the manuscript.

A reading of the book shows that its nature is much inferior to our Scriptures, for it contains incidents which sound much like pagan folklore.

December 15, 1956

A WHITE CHRISTMAS versus THE RIGHT CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 9)

You see, the shepherds could not be out in the fields watching their flocks in December. They are kept in the sheepfolds in the wintertime and taken out in the springtime.

BONNY.—If Jesus was not born on Dec. 25, when was He born?

ESTHER.—On the First day of Abib, the time of the New Moon Feast. The Bible tells us that Jesus' parents attended the yearly feasts at Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

ANNA LEE.—What is Abib? What does it mean, Esther? I don't believe I have ever heard of that before.

ESTHER.—Abib means "spring, or sprouting month, the month of green ears, month of flowers." It is the first month of God's year; and God's year began in the spring.

DONNA.—Well, I do declare! Where did I read something about the year beginning in March away back in the past? Let me think. (*Pauses to think, then finds book in schoolbag.*) Why, here it is, right here on the cover of our Junior Red Cross magazine. (*Reads*)—"December means 'the tenth month' for that was its place in the old calendar which began in March." Well, well, girls, I must admit that there is much truth that we let slip by until something like this comes up. Then we begin to wake up a little and wonder where we have been so long! Who, then, changed the time, Esther?

ESTHER.—That great Roman power. As you know, our time is Roman time. Bible time is lunar time, that is, governed by the moon.

ANNA LEE.—Please tell us, Esther, in what month of our time does Abib come?

ESTHER.—As Abib begins at the first new moon after the vernal equinox, it comes sometimes in March and sometimes in April.

PAULINE.—What a perfectly wonderful season in which to travel, when the earth is being reclothed in a fresh covering of grass and flowers. The birds and animals are stirred to new song and action.

PATTY.—Well, believe me, girls, there would be nothing perfectly wonderful about riding on a donkey for two or three days in the slushy, cold month of December. Donkeys just do not travel at fifty miles per hour, you know. They prefer to take it easy, and I do mean easy.

ESTHER.—A good point, Patty. We can understand why Bethlehem was full of travelers. This New Moon Feast was for all the family of King David, having been observed right from the time the children of Israel came out of Egypt, as you can read in Exodus 13: 4, and chapter 12: 2. When you get home from school today, please look up these verses. The little town was crowded. People had come from distant places and had traveled for many days, not just simply for the purpose of enrolling their names as required by Caesar's law, but also to attend the New Moon Feast, and later the Feast of the Passover.

LOIS.—Every room, every house was filled and there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn. The only place that they could find to stay was a stable. (*Looks at Nativity scene with delight. Girls all express adoration as each, in turn, looks at scene.*)

BONNY.—This makes me feel very happy to know that Jesus was born in the spring and not, as we have often sung in school, "on a cold, winter's night that was so deep."

ELAINE.—The trip to Palestine was very interesting, Esther, but I just cannot bear the thought of giving up a white Christmas, not yet, anyway. It just would not be Christmas to me. I can't do it, Esther. I just simply and plainly cannot do it.

ESTHER.—You know, Elaine, there is a day coming, and coming soon, when the Gentiles shall come from the ends of the earth and shall say, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit."

(*Bell rings; girls rise.*)

JUDITH.—We certainly have enjoyed this, and I for one hope to profit much from this valuable lesson. Thanks, Esther.

ESTHER.—The pleasure has been mine, I'm sure. Girls, here are some leaflets which will explain, in more detail, why we celebrate Christmas in the spring. Would you care to have your parents read them? (*ESTHER distributes leaflets and girls assemble for classes.*)

THE PROCESS AND THE END

It was said of Job, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and ye have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." And so, we too are bidden to be patient. We must wait to the "end of the Lord." The Lord's ends are attained through strange ways, or so it seems to us at times. He brings us through turmoil and upset, finally into peace and tranquillity. He brings us through many a storm into sunshine and happiness. Thus we see that sometimes the means are in contrast to the ends. God works toward the harvest through winter's frost and snow.

It is said that the maker of chaste and delicate porcelain reaches his lovely ends through an awful mortar, where the raw material of bone and clay is pounded into a cream. In that mortar-chamber we have no hint of the finished ware. But be patient; even in this chamber of affliction the ware is on the way to glory!

And so it is with the Almighty. He leads us through discord into harmonies, through opposition into union, through adversities into calm. His means of purification are processes, sometimes gentle, sometimes severe; and it is folly for us to think that we should have reached the end when we are only on the way.

"The end of the Lord . . . is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." We have experienced this pity and tender mercy many times. How often we have fallen—and yet His tender mercy is still outstretched. How often we have become weary beneath our burdens—and then we look up, and through our tears we see His smile of pity and compassion resting upon us. His longsuffering with us is of great length, for He wishes us to come to His standard, His "ends."

I have been impressed so often by the promise that some day our iniquities shall be remembered no longer. Even now our sins will be forgiven and forgotten if we forsake them. After all, we are the ones who keep reminding the Lord of these failures of ours—by repeatedly yielding to the same temptations, stumbling over the same stones of pride, foolishness and anger. Thus time and time again we bring to His remembrance the fact that we are not yet clean, not yet washed from our filthiness.

Some blessed day, shall we be able to say, "I have finished the work"? Then we shall have reached the consummation of the "process" and fully experienced the "end" of the Lord, and shall proclaim that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

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